

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously presented) A method for carrying out a bartering system over a network, comprising:
receiving a needs list having at least one needed item a user desires to acquire;
receiving a priority indication for the at least one needed item, wherein the priority indication indicates a level of desire the user has in acquiring the at least one needed item, and wherein the priority indication indicates items that are equivalent to the at least one needed item;
constructing the needs list with the priority indication into a barter protocol language; and
searching available items for a match with each of the at least one needed item based upon the priority indication wherein an item having a lower priority indication is matched as being equivalent to the at least one needed item only if an item having a higher priority is not found.
2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the bartering protocol language specifies a range of near equivalency associated with a plurality of dissimilar items to form near equivalent items, wherein the near equivalent items are items that are dissimilar to the at least one needed item, and wherein the priority indication indicates whether a near equivalent item will be satisfactory to the user in lieu of the at least one needed item.
3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein searching available items is performed first within a first bartering system and performed second across a different bartering system if no match is found during the search within the first bartering system.
4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3 wherein the first bartering system associated with a first barter protocol language and wherein the different bartering system associated with a second barter protocol language and further comprising:
translating, before the searching is performed across the different bartering system, the needs list from the first barter protocol language to a common barter protocol language, wherein the common barter protocol language comprises a representation of the needs list and [[the]] an availability list that is common to both the first bartering system and the different bartering system.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the needs list further comprises a range of near equivalent items with each near equivalent item having an associated priority indication indicating a user's desire to accept a given near equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match for the given needed item is not found.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the match is a direct match having a one to one correspondence.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the match is a chained association involving the needs list and availability lists of a plurality of users.

8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 3 wherein the first bartering system associated with a first barter protocol language and wherein the different bartering system associated with a second barter protocol language and further comprising:

translating, before the searching is performed across the different bartering system, the needs list from the first barter protocol language to the second barter protocol language.

9. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising receiving a second priority indication for a given available item indicating a user's desire to use the given available item to carry out a bartering transaction.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein the second priority indication is indicated by a monetary value that the user is willing to accept for the given available item.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving a monetary value associated with each of the at least one needed item.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising receiving a monetary value priority indication, associated with the received monetary value, wherein the monetary value priority indication indicates a user's willingness to vary a payment value for a given needed item from the monetary value.

13. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising receiving monetary value associated with each of the at least one available item.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising receiving a monetary value priority indication, associated with the received monetary value, wherein the monetary value priority indication indicates a user's willingness to vary a received value for a given available item from the monetary value.
15. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the monetary value is received from data provided by a rating agency.
16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
receiving a priority indication for a group of two or more items.
17. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the barter protocol language is in XML.
18. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein each of the at least one needed item can be at least one of a physical item and a nonphysical item.
19. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein each physical item and each nonphysical item has a corresponding representation mechanism within the barter protocol language.
20. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the nonphysical item represents a needed service.
21. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein each of the at least one available item can be at least one of a physical item and a nonphysical item.
22. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein the nonphysical item represents an available service.
23. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising indicating equivalency of at least one available item with at least one needed item.
24. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising finding a match for at least one given available item in consideration for a found match for at least one given needed item, wherein the at least one available item, and the at least one needed item are represented in terms of equivalency.

25. (Previously presented) A barter protocol language comprising:
means for specifying a needs list having at least one needed item a user desires to acquire of
needed items for each one of a plurality of users;
means for specifying an availability list of available items for each one of the plurality of users;
means for specifying a priority indication for at least one of i) each needed item, and ii) each
group of at least one item, indicating a corresponding user's priority for acquiring the needed item; and
means for specifying a range of near equivalency associated with a plurality of dissimilar items to
form near equivalent items, wherein the near equivalent items are items that are dissimilar to the at least
one needed item, and wherein each near equivalent item has an associated priority indication indicating a
user's desire to accept a given near equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match for the given
needed item cannot be found.

26. (Previously presented) The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein an item having a lower
priority indication is matched as being equivalent to the at least one needed item only if an item having a
higher priority is not found.

27. (Original) The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein the language is one of a markup
language.

28. (Original) The barter protocol language of claim 27 wherein the mark up language is XML.

29. (Original) The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein each needed item and each available
item has a corresponding representation mechanism.

30. (Original) The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein the needed items and available items
can be physical items and nonphysical items.

31. (Original) The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein the nonphysical items are
representative of services.

32. (Previously presented) A computer program product comprising:
A computer usable medium including computer usable program code for carrying out bartering
over a network, said computer program product comprising:

computer usable program code for receiving a needs list having at least one needed item a user desires to acquire;

computer usable program code for receiving a priority indication for at least one needed item, wherein the priority indication indicates a level of desire the user has in acquiring the at least one needed item, and wherein the priority indication indicates items that are equivalent to the at least one needed item;

computer usable program code for constructing the needs list with the priority indication into a barter protocol language; and

computer usable program code for searching available items for a match with each of the at least one needed item based upon the priority indication an item having a lower priority indication is matched as being equivalent to the at least one needed item only if an item having a higher priority is not found.

33. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 32 wherein the bartering protocol language specifies a range of near equivalency associated with a plurality of dissimilar items to form near equivalent items, wherein the near equivalent items are items that are dissimilar to the at least one needed item, and wherein the priority indication indicates whether a near equivalent item will be satisfactory to the user in lieu of the at least one needed item.

34. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 32 further comprising:

computer usable program code for searching available items is performed first within a first bartering system and performed second across a different bartering system if no match is found during the search within the first bartering system.

35. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 34 wherein the first bartering system associated with a first barter protocol language and wherein the different bartering system associated with a second barter protocol language and further comprising:

computer usable program code for translating, before the searching is performed across the different bartering system, the needed items from the first barter protocol language to a common barter protocol language, wherein the common barter protocol language comprises a representation of the needs list and the availability list that is common to both the first bartering system and the different bartering system.

36. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 32 wherein the needs list further comprises a range of near equivalent items with each near equivalent item having an associated priority

indication indicating a user's desire to accept a given near equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match for the given needed item is not found.

37. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 32 wherein the match is a direct match having a one to one correspondence.

38. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 32 wherein the match is a chained association involving the needs list and availability lists of a plurality of users.

39. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 34 further comprising computer usable program code for translating, before the searching is performed across the different bartering system, the needs list from the first barter protocol language to the second barter protocol language and enabling an indication of equivalency of at least one available item with the at least one needed item.

40. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 33 further comprising: computer usable program code for searching further comprises means for finding a match for at least one given available item in consideration for a found match for at least one given needed item, wherein the at least one available item, and the at least one needed item are represented in terms of equivalency.

41. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 40 wherein the at least one given needed item and the at least one given available item are dissimilar items.